

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0307

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, BC

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA

REF: A) STATE 37691 B) GABORONE A-04,

C) 75 GABORONE 1644, D) 75 GABORONE 1531,

E) 75 GABORONE 1475, F) 75 GABORONE 1458,

G) 75 USUN 5417

1. ANSWERS BELOW ARE KEYED TO QUESTIONNAIRE IN PARA 7, REF A.

EXTENSIVE USE IS MADE OF RELEVANT MESSAGES AS SUGGESTED PARA 6.

(A) BOTSWANA'S OVERRIDING INTEREST IS SOUTHERN AFRICA. EVERYTHING THE GOG DOES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA OR BILATERALLY IS COLORED BY THE CONFLICTING FACTORS OF OPPOSITION TO RACIAL OPPRESSION AND NEED TO COEXIST WITH MINORITY RULED NEIGHBORS (SEE PAGE 2, REF B). THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN THE REGION ARE MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA, SELF-DETERMINATION IN NAMIBIA, EQUALITY AND HUMAN DIGNITY FOR THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA. BOTSWANA USUALLY DOES NOT TAKE INITIATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT KHAMA, ALONG WITH PRESIDENT KAUNDA, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT PRESIDENTS NYERE AND MACHEL, HAS PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. ANY MULTILATERAL DEVELOP-

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MENTS DURING 1976 REGARDING SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE OF VITAL

INTEREST TO BOTSWANA.

2. ANOTHER MAJOR ISSUE WHICH BOTSWANA WILL FOLLOW DURING 1976 IS THE QUESTION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (NIEO). THE SECRETARY'S SPECIAL SESSION PROPOSALS WERE RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM HERE. WHILE WELCOMING THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSIONS SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION AND COOPERATION, FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE 30TH UNGA DISCUSSED THE "GROWING GAP IN LIVING STANDARDS BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS" AND CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NIEO, AGAIN, ALTHOUGH BOTSWANA IS UNLIKELY TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE ON THIS MATTER, IT REMAINS A SUBJECT OF CONCERN HERE.

3. (B) ON ISSUES WHICH ARE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO BOTSWANA (KOREA, GUAN, ETC) THE GOB SEEMS TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY GUIDED BY OAU POSITIONS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ZIONISM VOTE, ON WHICH BOTSWANA ABSTAINED, THE GOB'S UN VOTING PATTERN HAS CLOSELY FOLLOWED THE OAU (SEE PAGE 6, REF B) AND EVEN ON THIS ISSUE THE OAU DID NOT HAVE A CONSENSUS POSITION.

4. THERE ARE TWO MAJOR REASONS FOR BOTSWANA'S TENDENCY TO FOLLOW OAU POSITIONS, SUBSTANTIVE AND PROCEDURAL. ON THE SUBSTANTIVE SIDE, IS THE NEED TO PROTECT ITS CREDIBILITY AS A NONALIGNED COUNTRY IN LIGHT OF ITS VERY MODERATE POSITION IN SEEKING PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA RATHER THAN THE MORE MILITANT POSITIONS OF MANY OF THE OAU STATES. IN THIS REGARD, ITS POLICIES TEND TO FOLLOW THOSE OF ITS NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH, ZAMBIA, WITH WHOE PRESIDENT (KAUNDA), SIR SERETSE KHAMA SHARES MANY MODERATE POLITICAL VIEWS. ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR BOTSWANA'S STAYING IN LINE WITH ZAMBIAN VIEWS IS THE FACT THAT AS THE SECURITY SITUATION DETERIORATES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, BOTSWANA, WHICH HAS NO ARMY OF ITS OWN, WOULD HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO LOOK AMONG ITS NEAR NEIGHBORS FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE. PROCEDURALLY, BOTSWANA TENDS TO FOLLOW OAU POSITIONS BECAUSE ITS MINISCULE STAFF (PAGE 6, REF B) IS SIMPLY UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE VAST NUMBER OF UN ISSUES AND ACCEPTS THE SUPPORT OF THE LARGISH OAU SECRETARIAT FOR BACKGROUND MATERIALS WITH AN APPROPRIATE SLANT TO USE IN STAFFING ITS BRIEFING PAPERS.

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5. IN MOST CASES WE DO NOT SEE BOTSWANA AS HAVING ATTEMPTED TO INFLUENCE OTHER COUNTRIES ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES, HOWEVER, ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES BOTSWANA IS PREPARED TO CALL FOR WORLD-WIDE CONDEMNATION OF APARTHEID, END TO SOUTH AFRICA'S ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF NAMIBIA, AND THE ILLEGAL SMITH REGIME IN RHODESIA.

6. (C) GOB APPEARS TO ISSUE ADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONS TO ITS UN PERMREP AND TO BE ABLE TO CONTROL HIM REASONABLY EFFECTIVELY. THE PERMREP HAS FLEXIBLE AUTHORITY ON ISSUES WHICH THE GOB SEES AS NOT AFFECTING BOTSWANA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA DIRECTLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOWED DCM A TELEX INSTRUCTION TO THE PERMRSP INSTRUCTING HIM TO VOTE AGAINST THE ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION UNLESS "OVERRIDING OBJECTIONS" DICATED OTHERWISE (PARA 3, REF D). BOTSWANA EVENTUALLY ABSTAINED ON THIS RESOLUTION, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE PERMREP MADE THE FINAL DECISION ON HIS OWN OR RECEIVED FRESH INSTRUCTIONS.

7. IN ANOTHER INSTANCE, THE VOTE ON GUAN AND DECOLONIZATION (REF C), THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS EXPLAINED TO THE DCM THAT ON MANY MATTERS THE UN DELEGATION HAS "BROAD DISCRETION" TO REACH POSITIONS ON THE BASIS OF VIEWS OF COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. IN A LATER DISCUSSION, THE SECRETARY ADDED THAT THE DELEGATION TOOK ITS POSITION BASED ON PAST YEAR'S PRECEDENTS AND UNDER GENERAL GUIDANCE WAS AUTHORIZED TO DO DO WITHOUT REFRENCE TO MINISTRY. HE NOTED THAT IN CASES WHERE FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS MADE DEMARCHE PRIOR TO VOTES, THE MINISRY WAS PREPARED TO QUERY THE DELEGATION ON ITS POSITION AND AFTER REVIEW SENT INSTUCTIONS AS DETERMINED BY APPROPRIATE LEVEL DECISION. THUS TIMELINESS IS IMPORTANT IN GETTING THE GOB TO ADDRESS ISSUES WE REGARD AS SIGNIFICANT.

8. THE UNRELIABILITY OF GOB'S GOBORONE-NEW YORK TELCOMMUNICATIONS MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO SOME CONFUSION SURROUNDING GOB'S HANDLIN OF THE KOREAN ISSUE PROCEDURAL VOTE. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE UN DELEGATION HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ABSTAIN ON THE PROCEDURAL VOTE (REF E AND F) WHILE THE PERMREP WAS TELLING AMBASSADOR SHERER THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO SUPPORT A MOVE TO REVERSE THE PRIORITY OF THE KOREAN RESOLUTIONS (REFB). THE CONFUSION WAS ULTIMATELY CONFIDENTIAL

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CLARIFIED BY A REPEAT OF INSTRUCTIONS, AND THE PERMREP ABSTAINED AS INSTRUCTED.

9. (D) THE PERMREP HAS NO INDEPENDENT POLITICAL POWER BUT APPEARS TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE AS MAJOR ADVISER TO MINISTER AND PRESIDENT IN DECISION-MAKING ON UN ISSUES.

10. (E) GOB OFFICIALS LISTNE ATTENTIVELY TO OUR REPRESENTATIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES; BUT THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT WE OBTAIN THE VOTE WE WISH. THE GOB APPEARS TO UNDERSTAND AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THEIR ACTIONS

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ACTION AF-06

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AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 0307

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, BC

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA

ON USG-GOB RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH THIS UNDERSTANDING DOES NOT MEAN WE ALWAYS MANAGE TO CHANGE BOTSWANA'S POSITIONS. THE GOB RECOGNIZES THAT WE HAVE WORLD-WIDE INTERESTS WHILE THEIRS GENERALLY CENTER IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THEY WOULD BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO SOME OF OUR VIEWS IF THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT OUR POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WAS IN LINE WITH WHAT THEY REGARD AS THEIR VITAL INTERESTS.

11. GOB DOES NOT USUALLY SOLICIT EMBASSY SUPPORT ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES OR ON GENERAL APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. AS WE NOTED ABOVE AND ON PAGE 2 OF REF B. BOTSWANA HAS BEEN DEVELOPING A "THIRD WORLD", MORE NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY. THIS APPLIES TO GOB'S APPROACH TO AND PRIORITIES IN THE UN. END RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE.

12. POST IS MORE APPRECIATIVE OF BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE PAPERS TO BE PROVIDED ON VARIOUS ISSUES AS DISCUSSED PARAS 1 AND 2 REF A. HOWEVER, MANPOWER CONSTRAINTS HERE REQUIRE DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING THE BRIEFING PAPERS AND TALKING CONFIDENTIAL

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POINTS REFERRED TO. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT WHEN INSTRUCTIONS ARE SENT ON THESE ISSUES THEY BE SENT IN A FORM (NOT TELEGRAPHHESE) THAT CAN BE EASILY AND PROPERLY TRANSPPOSED INTO A TALKING PAPER OR AIDE MEMOIRE FOR USE IN DEMARCHE AS APPROPRIATE.

13. WE AGREE THAT IS IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO KEEP THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTLY INFORMED OF OUR CONCERNS ON THE UN ISSUES. HOWEVER, IN THIS SMALL COUNTRY THE GOVERNMENT GIVE SIGNIFICANT WEIGHT TO THE VIEWS OF ITS PERMREP (WHO IS IN EFFECT THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER); THUS ADDITIONAL EFFORTS IN NEW YORK WOULD PAY SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS. RELATED TO THIS IS NEED FOR DEMARCHE IN WASHINGTON WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL.

14. AS EMPHASIZED ABOVE, BOTSWANA TENDS TO LOOK TO THE OAU RATHER THAN THE "NONALIGNED GROUP" OR THE "GROUP OF 77" FOR POLICY ASSISTANCE. ADDITIONAL MANPOWER IN ADDIS TO INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE OAU SECRETARIAT, WHICH APPARENTLY PROVIDES AT LEAST SOME BACKGROUD STAFFING ON MANY ISSUES, COULD HAVE A HIGH PAYOFF AMONG AFRICAN DELEGATIONS AT THE UN.
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